

VZCZCXRO3099
PP RUEHDE RUEHDIR
DE RUEHKU #0032 0091439
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 091439Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8014
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS KUWAIT 000032

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KU](#) [NATIONAL ASSEMBLY](#)

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT'S OPPOSITION ALLIANCE CRACKS AS POPULAR ACTION BLOC WITHDRAWS

REF: A. 06 KUWAIT 4682

[B.](#) 06 KUWAIT 4206

[C.](#) 06 KUWAIT 3826

[¶1.](#) (SBU) Parliament's nine-member Popular Action Bloc announced January 7 its withdrawal from the 34-member Reform Bloc formed last October (ref B). The other two opposition blocs, the liberal National Action Bloc (8 MPs) and the Islamic Bloc (17 MPs), will continue to cooperate formally within the framework of the Reform Bloc. The nominal reason for the withdrawal was a dispute between the Popular Action Bloc and MP Ahmed Baqer, the Chairman of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee and a member of the Islamic Bloc, over Baqer's decision to allow the Government to introduce amendments to the Public Properties Law while in his committee, something the Popular Action Bloc strongly opposed. However, tensions between the opposition blocs have been simmering for some time due to conflicting views on a number of legislative issues.

[¶2.](#) (SBU) While effectively shattering the illusion of an opposition majority, the move is unlikely to have serious political ramifications. From the beginning, the Reform Bloc was an ad hoc alliance. The three opposition blocs operated largely independent of one another, coordinating primarily on issues they mutually supported, like reducing the number of electoral districts. Since Parliament reconvened on October 30, the blocs have seldom voted together and have even been divided themselves on certain issues (ref A). As they have in the past, Popular Action Bloc members are likely to continue to cooperate with the two other opposition blocs when it is in their interest to do so.

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LeBaron